

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L EC BRUSSELS 02634

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EEC, PO
SUBJECT: PORTUGAL'S EC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

REFS: (A) EC BRUSSELS 2502; (B) PARIS 7292

1. SUMMARY: IN COMMENTING ON SOARES' VISIT TO BRUSSELS, AN EC COMMISSION OFFICIAL SINGLED OUT THE FORCE OF SOARES' PERSONALITY AND THE COGENCY OF HIS PRESENTATION OF THE POLITICAL CASE FOR PORTUGAL'S ACCESSION TO EC AS DETERMINING FACTORS IN HIS APPARENTLY SUCCESSFUL TRIP TO EC CAPITALS AND EC COMMISSION. SOARES TOLD COMMISSION HE WAS BUOYED BY HIS RECEPTION IN ALL EC CAPITALS, AND IN PARIS FOUND THE FRENCH LESS NEGATIVE THAN HE FEARED. COMMISSION OFFICIAL ALSO SAID COMMISSION WILL PROBABLY ESTABLISH SHORTLY A TASK FORCE INCORPORATING ALL THE RELEVANT COMMISSION DEPARTMENTS TO EXAMINE THE MANY RAMIFICATIONS OF COMMUNITY ENLARGEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. CAPORALE, RESPONSIBLE FOR SOUTHERN EUROPE IN EC COMMISSION'S DG I (EXTERNAL RELATIONS), CONFIRMED TO MISSION OFFICER MARCH 17 THAT SOARES' MARCH 11-12
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DISCUSSIONS WITH COMMISSION PRESIDENT JENKINS AND OTHER COMMISSIONERS WENT "EXTREMELY WELL." CAPORALE SAID THAT ON DEPARTING BRUSSELS SOARES TOLD HIM HE WAS "VERY PLEASED" WITH WAY THINGS ARE GOING THUS FAR REGARDING UPCOMING PORTUGUESE APPLICATION FOR EC MEMBERSHIP. ACCORDING TO CAPORALE, SOARES TOLD COMMISSION HE HAD BEEN BUOYED BY HIS RECEPTION IN

ALL EC CAPITALS, INCLUDING PARIS, WHERE HE HAD, ON THE WHOLE, FOUND THE FRENCH LESS NEGATIVE TOWARD A PORTUGUESE APPLICATION AND NEGOTIATIONS TOWARD ULTIMATE MEMBERSHIP THAN HE HAD FEARED.

3. CAPORALE TOLD US HE BELIEVES THAT WHAT HE CHARACTERIZED AS THE "OPEN, FORTHRIGHT" PERSONALITIES OF SOARES AND THE ENTOURAGE ACCOMPANYING HIM, AS WELL AS THE FORCE AND CLARITY WITH WHICH SOARES PUT THE POLITICAL CASE FOR PORTUGUESE MEMBERSHIP, WERE LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR A RECEPTION IN EC CAPITALS WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE EXCEEDED SOARES' EXPECTATION. (OFFICIALS FROM SEVERAL PERM DELS HERE HAVE TOLD US THE SAME THING ON THE BASIS OF TELEGRAMS FROM THEIR HOME GOVERNMENTS.) SOARES REPEATED TO THE EC COMMISSION WHAT BECAME, DURING HIS TOUR, A FAMILIAR LITANY: PORTUGUESE DEMOCRATS HAVE BEEN FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS OR MORE, AND THE COUNTRY IS MAKING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS. IT REMAINS, HOWEVER, POISED BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT REACTION, AND A POSITIVE EC RESPONSE TO ITS REQUEST FOR MEMBERSHIP IS CRITICAL TO MAINTAINING EQUILIBRIUM. PORTUGAL WISHES TO BECOME 'NEITHER A PUERTO RICO NOR A CUBA.'

4. CAPORALE LAUDED THE OPENNESS WITH WHICH THE PORTUGUESE DISCUSSED THEIR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND PLANS, AND THOUGHT THIS AUGURED WELL FOR THE MONTHS AHEAD AS THE COMMISSION DRAWS UP FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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THE EC COUNCIL A FORMAL OPINION ON PORTUGUESE ACCESSION. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT FURTHER EC-PORTUGUESE DISCUSSIONS HAVE TENTATIVELY BEEN SET FOR APRIL 18 (REF A), CAPORALE SAID THAT DATE MIGHT SLIP IF EC COUNCIL FAILS, FOR ANY REASON, AT ITS APRIL 5 MEETING TO INSTRUCT THE COMMISSION TO BEGIN DRAWING UP AN OPINION.

5. IN REVIEWING THE ENLARGEMENT QUESTION MORE BROADLY, CAPORALE SAID IT APPEARS THE EC COMMISSION WILL SHORTLY ESTABLISH A TASKFORCE CUTTING ACROSS SEVERAL COMMISSION DIRECTORATES GENERAL TO EXAMINE ENLARGEMENT IN ITS ENTIRETY, INCLUDING SUCH THORNY ASPECTS AS THE IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY'S AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AND THE REFORM OF COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS. IN REPLY TO A QUESTION, HE SAID THERE ARE A GREAT MANY IDEAS ABOUT INSTITUTIONAL REFORM FLOATING AROUND THE COMMISSION IN THE MINDS OF INDIVIDUAL COMMISSION OFFICIALS, BUT NO ATTEMPT HAD YET BEEN MADE TO LAY

THEM SIDE BY SIDE AND EXAMINE THEM IN A COHERENT,
PURPOSEFUL WAY. HE SAID THAT ASSIGNMENT WILL FALL
TO THE TASK FORCE WHEN IT IS ESTABLISHED.HINTON

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